

# SCALPEL & LINE

Vol. 1 No. 6

U. S. S. REPOSE

26 September 1945

## CONQUER RECORD STORM

### CREW MEMBERS GIVEN CARDS AS SOUVENIR OF TYPHOON

Cards testifying that the Repose passed directly through the 'eye' of a typhoon were distributed to crew members recently. The cards are billfold size and contain information on barometer readings, wind velocity, and wave height in the 'eye' and in the inside perimeter.

The cards were signed by Capt. Britton, Typhoonus Rex; Capt. Frazer, keeper of the scalpel, and Comdr. deSoboll, keeper of the trident.

They were designed by O. W. Beleck, Prtr 2c, and printed in the ship's print shop.

### Wind Ranges From 150 Knots To Dead Calm During Storm

Wind velocity during the typhoon of 16-17 September ranged from almost complete calm at the eye of the storm to 150 knots less than an hour later according to official entries in the ship's log.

A record of the readings from the log for 16 September follows:

Time	Speed
0100:	20 knots
1000:	50 "
1700:	80 "
1900:	90 "
2100:	130 "
Eye	Very little wind
2200:	150 knots
2400:	135 "

### 'SCALPEL AND LINE' DELAYED

This edition of Scalpel and Line was necessarily delayed because at publication time last week the equipment in the print shop was standing in several inches of water brought in by the storm. Printing of 'Eye of the Storm' cards for passengers and crew members caused further delay.

The folks at home might like to read this copy of the ship's news.

### REPOSE BATTLES THROUGH EYE OF TYPHOON OFF OKINAWA ISLE ON NIGHT OF 16-17 SEPTEMBER

Record-breaking winds and waves lashed the U. S. S. Repose as it battled its way through the eye of the Okinawa typhoon the night of 16 September.

Entries in the ship's log indicate that the wind reached a velocity of 150 knots (approximately 173 miles per hour) as compared to a wind velocity of 98 knots in the typhoon of 24 September 1917 which is the only other figure available. Waves reached a height of 75 feet.

Barometric pressure which has an important influence on the functioning of a ship's machinery as well as being an excellent indication of a storm's severity dropped to 25.55 inches from a normal of 30 inches at sea level.

Barometer readings from other severe storms include a previous mark of 26.93 inches as the lowest sea level reading on record for an official station. This figure was recorded on 13 September 1934. Other readings available are 27.37 inches in 1924 and 28.21 inches in 1927.

The Repose lay at anchor in Buckner Bay, Okinawa, when first warnings of a severe storm reached her around midnight 15 September. She had been there since that afternoon when she pulled in from Pearl Harbor with over 300 Army personnel aboard. Orders were given immediately to get the ship in readiness to get under way on one-half hour notice.

The ship left the bay about 0900 on 16 September along with all other ships that had been ordered out to sea. It was unsafe to stay in the harbor because there was danger of being blown onto a reef, the beach or into another ship by the high winds.

The ship was set on an easterly course as soon as it had cleared. See **STORM** on page 4.

There have been extra copies of Scalpel and Line printed so that you may save one and send a copy home or to a friend.



## SCALPEL AND LINE

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The opinions expressed in Scalpel and Line are those of the editorial staff and do not necessarily constitute those of this command or the Navy in general.

Passed by Naval censors.

## EDITORIAL

We suggest that you save this copy of Scalpel and Line. Send it home or put it with your memos. Before you start to the 1950 American Legion convention you might want to brush up on all the facts of the typhoon you went through so you can 'snow' the boys with facts.

This issue of Scalpel and Line was not conceived with any hope of giving you news. Of necessity it is over a week late and we couldn't hope to give you a 'hot' story on a storm that you know plenty about already.

The editorial staff planned this edition hoping to give you the *FACTS* about the storm so you could send them to your family and friends as an *authoritative record*. We purposely omitted all scuttlebutt.

We planned it with one other purpose in mind, too. We wanted to give credit to our skipper, our executive officer, our navigator and our engineering officer for a *wonderful display of seamanship* and for the wonderful way in which they guided their efficient crews through a superb performance.

It can truly be said that every member of the crew came out of the storm a much wiser person. While the experience was not combat it was every bit as dangerous. When a ship is in combat it ordinarily stands to lose only part of its crew. We were gambling *All or nothing*.

Very few ships have fought a typhoon, passed through the eye and lived to tell about it. *Excellent*

## DIVINE SERVICES

### Sunday

Catholic Mass-----0700 and 0900  
General Services-----1000

### Thursday

Christian Fellowship Meeting-----  
-----1915

### Daily

Catholic Mass-----1645

## CREW MEMBERS COME THROUGH STORM WITH FEW INJURIES

Crew members came through the typhoon of 16 September with only minor injuries. Most widespread of all ailments was violent seasickness which struck a large number of persons, including men who were forced by necessity to continue on watch.

The ship's sickbay reported five injuries as a direct result of the storm. E. E. Fitzgerald, PhMlc, was treated for lacerations and E. E. Heidt, HAlc, for a foot injury, as a result of mess hall accidents. R. E. Kennelly, RMlc, and J. A. Mininicho, Slc, suffered shoulder injuries when a table in the communications room pinned them down, and W. E. Dickhoner, SK2c, received a broken finger when a weather door was swung shut catching his hand.

## Barometer Falls to 25.55 In.

Official recordings from the log of the ship show that the lowest barometer during the typhoon of 16-17 September came at 2100 the night of the 16th.

A list of official readings for the most severe hours of the storm follows:

Time	Barometer
16 September	
0100	29.69
1930	28.26
2030	26.00
2100	25.55
2126	Steady
2132	Fluctuating
2145	Rising
17 September	
1200	29.59

*judgment, thorough sea knowledge, hard work, and the guidance of the Almighty are all given due credit for our safety today.*

In the words of Capt. Britton on the day after the storm, 'We are all lucky to be here.' Every one of us would agree!



## ENGINE ROOM CREW GIVEN TROUBLE BY BIG WAVES, LOW BAROMETER

'Will the engines fail us?' was the question most persons aboard the Repose were asking themselves as the storm reached its height and the screw shook the ship in violent jolts each time it dipped into the sea after being thrown clear.

The engines did not fail and a large portion of credit is due to the engineering staff under the command of Lt. Comdr. C.V. McIntosh, chief engineer, for there were several times when tough situations arose. All crew members realized the hopelessness of our case had the engines failed in the 150-knot wind.

The low barometric pressure in the 'eye' of the storm made it impossible to keep the engines at top speed as the vacuum in the main turbine was reduced from a normal of 30 inches to 28 $\frac{1}{2}$ . The engine room crew was dashing constantly for the throttle as it was necessary to keep it wide open when the screw was in the sea and necessary to cut it when the screw was thrown clear of the sea to prevent destruction of the reduction gears (part of the screw control).

At one time during the storm one of two D.C. generators which supply electricity for all auxiliary machinery, went 'dead'. The one generator left on the line was barely capable of carrying its own load and the load of the one which failed.

The hydraulic pumps in the steering gear lost suction and the ship had, for a short time, what is called a 'dead rudder', meaning that it could not be controlled from the bridge. A hurried shift was made and dual mechanism again was responsible for meeting the situation.

In the midst of all their troubles the engine room crew met another

difficulty when, without warning, the rack holding spare boiler tubes tore loose and its heavy load started directly down upon the engines. Fate took hold when the tubes became fouled short of a complete fall and hung precariously over the engines.

## SHIP'S LOG GIVES OFFICIAL ACCOUNT OF VIOLENT STORM

The official story of the 16-17 September typhoon is given in the following notes taken from the ship's log. The entries are those made by each watch.

16 September 1945

00-04 Buckner bay, Okinawa--ship in readiness to get under way in  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour.

04-08 Started using engine to ease strain on anchor--lost motor launch--wind and sea increasing.

08-12 Under way 0911-heavy easterly squalls--passed through nets 1009-course 120T at (11 knot) 1100 Barometer starts drop.

12-16 Winds intense--same course--attempted to change course to South West but prevented by sea and wind.

16-20 Continuous changing of course and speed to ease ship thru heavy mountainous sea (65 ft)--ship rolled 37 degrees starboard and 26 degrees port--wind at 140 knots in gusts.

20-24 (2030) Barometer falling below scale--wind 140 knots--seas 75 feet.

(2100) In center (eye) of storm position 25.35 N 128.20 E--seas confused--whirling-dead calm and clear sky--engine room reports unable to maintain more than 26 in. vacuum--changed course to 180 T.

(2122) Ran out of eye of typhoon into mountainous seas and hurricane winds--barometer starts to rise.

(2155) Barometer 27.72--stormy winds from N.W.--ship riding somewhat easier with wind on starboard quarter.

17 September 1945

00-04 Wind and seas decreased to 40 and 50 knots--barometer to 29.16.

## POSITION OF REPOSE DURING STORM SHOWN IN LORAN FIXES

The position of the Repose at various times during the storm is shown by the following Loran Fixes taken from the ship's log:

Time	Position
16 September	
1630	26.00N and 128.10E
2100	25.35N and 128.20E
17 September	
0900	24.26N and 128.32E



## HISTORIC STORMS LESS SEVERE THAN 16 SEPTEMBER TYPHOON

Historic typhoons of which some records are available on the Repose include those of 1917, 1924 and 1934. Information on these storms is given here in order that crew members may compare them with the 1945 typhoon which the Repose passed through.

1917--The typhoon started in Yap and passed over Japan. It killed 1,127 people and destroyed 60,000 homes. The barometer fell to 28.21 inches.

1924--The storm formed near Guam on 5 August. It traveled west, northwest to the Nansei Shoto (Okinawa) by 9 August and began a series of turns to east, northeast, north and west, northwest crossing China, Korea and Honshu islands. The island of Okinawa suffered severely from winds lasting from 9 to 17 August. Many hundreds of people were killed and great property loss was experienced. The steamship Borneo Maru reported a low barometric pressure of 27.37 inches. This is commonly referred to as the Okinawa typhoon.

1934--This typhoon started over the Caroline islands, passed over Osaka, Kobe and Kyoto (Japan). It killed 2,500 persons and wrecked 11,000 vessels. The mercury in the barometer fell to 26.93 inches which is the lowest sea level reading on record for an official station.

### STORM (Cont. from page 1)

the harbor in order that a good distance from the shore would be available in case a turn during the storm was necessary.

The winds became so strong during the next few hours that the ship could not be turned though Capt. Britton ordered the rudder over hard and the engines full speed.

Capt. Britton, Comdr. de Soboll, and Lt. Klarner decided at that time the only way to save the ship was to go through the storm trying to weather the waves by changing speed constantly.

After successfully battling the waves and wind until 2100, the ship entered suddenly into the calm eye of the storm. Here it was turned slightly to meet the oncoming wind which was the aft part of the circle.

The winds which followed as the ship left the eye of the storm reached the high of 150 knots.

## 'BIG WINDS' USUALLY FOLLOW SAME ROUTE THROUGH PACIFIC

Typhoons in this area usually originate in the Marianas group of islands and travel west, northwest toward Formosa, Japan, and Korea.

The storms ordinarily swing north east over some part of Japan or swing east out to sea before reaching Japanese territory.

The centers of most typhoons pass directly over the Nansei Shoto or Southwestern Islands (Okinawa) and then turn eastward.

The greatest number of typhoons take place in the month of September and the least number in January to April.

Direction of the wind at the periphery or outer storm regions of the circle is usually inclined toward the center or eye of the storm, while the wind direction near the center is in a more circular direction. Wind velocity increases toward the eye of the storm and barometric pressure decreases.

Highest wind velocities and lowest barometric pressures are reported from the lower Japanese waters over the Southwestern islands.

The eye of a typhoon varies from six to 25 miles in diameter. Seas are usually calmer in the eye but very disturbed and full of swirls. There is usually no rain or clouds.

Typhoons usually travel at an average rate of six to 12 knots but some reach a speed of 20 knots.

### 'TYPHOON' A CHINESE WORD--

The word typhoon is of Chinese origin and its root meant 'Strong wind'. It is a term applied to cyclonic storms of the western part of the North Pacific ocean. Similar cyclonic disturbances in the West Indies and on the Atlantic coast are called hurricanes.

A typhoon is a tropical storm with great wind intensity which revolves counter-clockwise.

At about 2200, the barometer started rising and the winds gradually decreased.

By dawn 17 September, the seas had quieted considerably though they remained far above anything the ship had experienced before. The ship was set at slow speed with the wind at its stern so it would ride easy and give the crew a chance to get some rest.

Why not send this paper home?